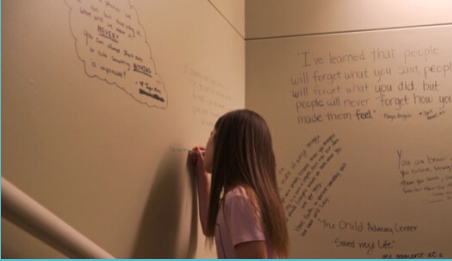


# GENERAL SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE



- Overly interested in theirs or other's genitals
- Continually wants to touch private parts of other children
- Compares genital size with other children
- Instigating and/or forcing 'sex play' with another child (often younger, more than 3 years difference in age)
- Inappropriate sex play, e.g. oral-genital contact between a 7 year old and a 4 year old (Note: with the increase in pornography viewing on the internet by young children, sex play is becoming more worrisome among similar-aged children)
- May show increase in delinquent behavior (most likely 8 years and above)

- Inappropriate sex play with another child happening more than 3 times, despite careful monitoring and discussion about boundaries
- Persistent masturbation that does not cease when told to stop
- Seductive/advanced sexual behavior
- Sexualized play with dolls or toys or animals
- Sexualized play involving forced penetration of objects vaginally or anally
- Chronic peeping, exposing and verbalizing obscenities
- Touching or rubbing against the genitals of adults or children that they do not know
- Persistent use of 'dirty' words



- Describing sexual acts and sexualized behavior beyond their years
- Drawings and/or games that involve inappropriate sexual activities
- Drawings that include large genitals on naked or clothed bodies
- Becoming upset when viewed changing clothes
- Talking in a sexualized way with unknown adults or older children
- Strong body odor
- Sores around the mouth
- Not wanting to go to a certain person's place or to an activity

- Blood or discharge on sheets or in underwear
- Pain while urinating or with bowel movements; frequent urinary tract infections
- Withdrawn and anxious behavior (irritable, clingy, listless)
- Excessive crying, unable to be soothed
- Secretive or say they have a 'special' secret they can't tell (this may be to gauge your reaction)
- Child or child's friend telling you about interference directly or indirectly
- Indirectly dropping hints about the abuse (again, to gauge your reaction)
- Bruising, scratches, rashes, cuts, burns or bleeding in the genital area and/or breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs



- Going to bed fully clothed
- Increase in nightmares and sleep disturbances
- Regressive behavior, e.g. a return to bed-wetting or soiling
- Sudden changes in behavior, e.g. from a happy child to an angry and/or defiant child
- Learning difficulties, poor concentration, lower grades, problems with peers
- Appetite changes (sudden and significant), failure to thrive
- Unexplained accumulation of money and gifts
- Increased talk of a 'special older friend'

**Most items on this checklist are only suggestive and never proof that a child has been sexually abused. Many of the behaviors can also be a result of other stressors in your child's life. Often, there are no visible indicators. Children react differently depending on age, extent of abuse, support from others and their relationship with their perpetrator.**

# ***"My child disclosed sexual abuse to me, what should I do?"***

Stay calm

Tell the child you believe them

Let them know they have done the right thing by telling you

Tell them they are brave and courageous

Reassure them that they are in no way to blame

Reassure them that they are loved

Tell them that they are safe and will be looked after

Let them know that you will do everything you can to stop the abuse (but make no promises)

Once the child is with a trusted and caring adult, contact local law enforcement or Department of Health and Human Services

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Sgt. Mark Unvert, Lincoln Police Department Special Victims Unit [402.441.6967]

FBI [lincoln@fbi.gov] or the Omaha Office [402.493.8688]

Child Advocacy Center [402.476.3200]

Caitlin Ossian or Aubrey Yost -- Child Advocates

Maja Cartwright -- Program Director

Stacie Bleicher, M.D. -- Medical Director

Lynn Ayers -- Executive Director



child advocacy center  
Where small voices can be heard.

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